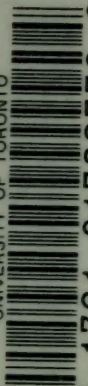


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Jesus—Man or God?

FIVE DISCOURSES

BY

Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, D. D.

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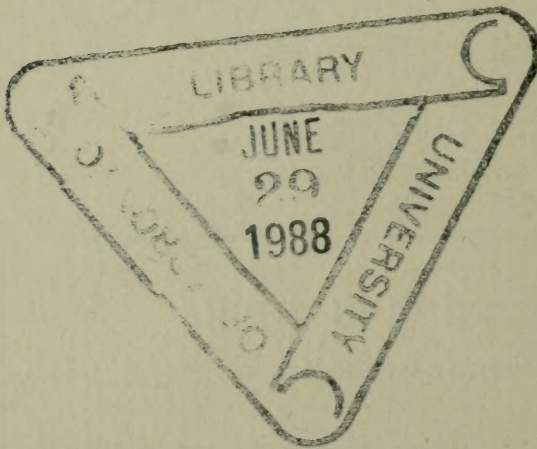
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DISCOURSE I.

THE JEWS AND JESUS.

Christian and Jew live side by side, speak the same speech, attend the same schools, follow like callings and like modes of life, pay fealty to the same country, and promote its best interests with equal zeal. Nevertheless, there is a difference between them,—one that has caused bitter hatreds and cruel persecutions in some countries, and prejudice in others, and that has, hitherto, defied every attempt at eradication. The price that has been asked of the Jew, in order to escape his ill-fate, namely, accepting Jesus, the Nazarene, as a God, he has been unable to pay. Almost 1900 years long has he borne heroically the penalty for his refusal. As stoutly as he declared, when the request was first made of him, so stoutly does he declare to-day, that he believes in One God, and in none besides, that the Decalogue forbids him to worship man or idol, that he regards Jesus as a brother in the flesh and spirit, as one who, as to birth, was mortal-born as are other men, and, as to character and ideals, was greater and better than most men, as one, who consecrated his life to the noblest of missions, sacrificed it in his heroic effort to free his country from the bondage of the Roman oppressor, died as other martyrs have died, and has continued dead unto this hour.

“But what says the Jew,” asks the Christian, “to what the New Testament has to say concerning Jesus and the Jews?” “It is taught in Holy Script,” says the Christian:

✓ “I. That Jesus was miraculously born, that God himself was his Father, through the agency of the Holy Ghost, that startling phenomena, never seen and heard before, manifested themselves at the hour of his birth, betokening his divine origin.

✓ “II. That he performed wondrous miracles, flew through the air, walked on the water, restored the dead to life, made the lame to walk, and the blind to see, and demons to do his bidding, all proving his supernatural powers.

✓ “III. That he was marvelously wise and that, having greater wisdom than had the other teachers of his day, and having direct revelations from his Father in heaven, he supplanted their teaching with superior teachings of his own; for which reason they hated him, compassed his arrest, and, by means of false witnesses and an unjust trial, effected his death.

✓
“IV. That, at the moment of his death, the earth quaked, the heavens grew dark, the temple veil rent in twain, the dead rose from their graves and walked about, all manifesting God’s wrath at the great iniquity that had been committed in the slaying of his only begotten son.

✓
“V. That his having been put to death was as much a part of the divine plan as was his having been born, that he was sent upon earth from heaven only to be slain, only to become a vicarious atonement, so that by his blood God’s wrath at the wickedness of mankind might be appeased, and through belief in the Son all mankind might be saved.

✓
“VI. That after his entombment he descended into hell, to redeem those who had been sentenced thither prior to his coming, and then he arose from the dead, conversed in the flesh with his disciples, gave them a charge of redemption to those who would believe in him, and of damnation to those who would deny him, and then ascended to heaven, where he seated himself at the right hand of God.”

To all these statements the Jew replies: “Thus it is taught in the New Testament, but who taught it, and when and how and why was it taught?”

And the answers he receives are so contradictory, so at variance with facts of history, with teachings of science, with canons of reason, so repudiated by higher Bible criticism, by the new theology, by the scholarship of eminent non-Jewish writers and pulpiteers, that he finds in these contradictions and denials and repudiations alone, quite independent of his own knowledge of the subject, good and sufficient reason for continuing to adhere to the position he assumed from the first.

To whatever source of information the Jew turns, he finds that Jesus himself never wrote a line of all that is taught in the New Testament, that not a scrap of his writing of any kind has ever been found or has ever been known to exist.

Not a word concerning his sayings and doings was known to have existed in writing before well-nigh two generations had passed after his death.

Not a sketch of his life, however brief, is extant for which a date can be assigned much earlier than the close of the first century.

Not a line of his life was transmitted to us from any of his disciples who lived and toiled with him. Of all the words recorded in the four gospels as having been spoken by Jesus, Paul, who entered upon his public career after the death of Jesus, and who was a voluminous writer, quotes but a single phrase, the

one is connection with the commemoration of the Last Supper.
(1)

Whatever story of his life we have comes to us by way of tradition, a source of information which, at best, is an unreliable one, how much more so when it comes to us from the imaginative orient of ancient days, and through partisan and propagandic agencies. There is, for instance, a bit of information recorded by Eusebius, who wrote at the end of the third century, which information had been orally transmitted from Papias, who lived in the middle of the second century, who had heard it from John, and he from Mark, and he from Peter, and he from Jesus. Ask an authority on psychology, and let him tell you how much historic reliance is to be placed on information, especially of a miraculous and supernatural kind, that is thus derived.

There is not a Jewish or Grecian or Roman contemporary writer, of whom there were a number of celebrated ones in the life-time of Jesus, who has recorded a single line of all the wondrous things related in the New Testament. It is not strange that heaven should have opened, that angels should have sung celestial anthems in the hearing of men, that a star should have left its orbit, and wandered in the sky to show the way to the newly-born son of God, that thousands of innocent little ones should have been slaughtered in the hope that one of them might be the Christ-child, that thousands should have been fed of a few loaves and a few fishes, that water should have been turned into wine, that the dead should have returned to life, and spoken to men, and ascended into heaven, in the sight of men, and yet not one word of all these stupendous events should have found its way into the contemporaneous writings of Judea or the Graeco-Roman empire? Is it possible that these people, usually very credulous, would have refused to believe in the godship of Jesus, after seeing the prodigious miracles he is said to have performed? Who, even in our day, would deny divinity to Jesus, were he to see him enter life, as no other man ever entered, and do things which no other man ever did, and depart from life as no other man ever departed?

We see, from a comparison between the gospels of St. Mark and St. John, that the older the story of Jesus the simpler it is, the freer from the supernatural, the friendlier to the Jew; and that the further removed the story is from the life-time of Jesus the more elaborate, complicated, ecclesiastical, Christological, it becomes, and the more hostile it grows towards the Jews. From the insertion of a spurious Jesus-passage into the writings of

1. I Cor. XI, 25.

Josephus, we know how texts in those days were tampered with for propagandic purposes. For the same purpose, parts were added to the New Testament, as, for instance, the last twelve verses of the closing chapter of the gospel according to St. Mark, which verses the latest revised version of the New Testament is obliged to acknowledge as not being contained in the oldest manuscript—knowing these, as other things of like import, we can account for the gradual growth of the one-time simple and natural story of the life of Jesus, a growth that had for its palpable object the aggrandizement of its hero, the punishing of those who persistently refused to recognize in him the only-begotten Son of God, the fitting him, for the sake of winning the Jews, with all the requisites of an expected Messiah, and, for the sake of winning the pagans, with all the supernatural powers required of one who was to be worshiped by them as a god.

Probably as many as ten different trends, all affecting the Jew, may be discerned in a critical study of the New Testament.

First, we observe in Jesus a Jew of Jews, one, who has no thought of ministering to any excepting his own people, one who has no thought of breaking with his people or of abrogating its laws and customs, or of founding a new creed or of having others found one in his name, or of considering himself a God-begotten, divine being, or of having any one else set up such a claim for him, one, who preaches and teaches like unto the learned and God-fearing Pharisaic Rabbis of his time, teaching morals like unto those they taught, and availing himself of their well-known style of aphorism and parable.

Second, excepting that the disciples believed that Jesus had been the expected Messiah, and that the other Jews did not, we observe no other difference between them; alike they regarded themselves loyal Jews, alike they worshiped the same God, in the same Temple.

Third, we observe, on the one side, very active propaganda to convince the Jews that their Messiah had come, and strenuous rejoinders, on the other side, that the Messiah the Jews expected would not be a preacher or teacher but a warrior, a redeemer, an emancipator, a savior, one, who would redeem, emancipate, save them from the tyranny of the Roman.

Fourth, we observe a growing hatred against the Jews because of their continued refusal to accept Jesus as their Messiah, and a determination on the part of the propagandists to plant the new creed among the pagans.

Fifth, we observe the gradual fashioning of Jesus into a pagan deity; divine parentage is given him, he is endowed with

miracle-working power, and, like unto the deified Roman emperors, an apotheosis is given him after death.

Sixth, we next see the Romans, who had crucified Jesus because of his having been proclaimed king of the Jews at a time when they were tributary to Rome, freed from all responsibility for the death of Jesus, and the whole guilt laid upon the Jews.

Seventh, we see a complete change of the Jewish Jesus into a pagan Christ.

Eighth, we observe gradual borrowings from the Egyptian, Phoenician, Grecian and Roman pantheons of yet other Christological teachings.

Ninth, the new creed finally conquers the creedless Graeco-Roman empire, and every link between it and the Jew is severed.

Tenth, Christianized pagans, far removed from Palestine, now become the heads of the new creed, and having no knowledge of Jews and Judaism, except what the Romans, the arch-enemies and conquerors of the Jews, had taught them, they weave into the New Testament statements concerning the laws and institutions and spirit of the Jews that are as false in fact as they prove pernicious in result.

Following out these successive stages, a number of statements, touching the Jews of New Testament times, become quite intelligible. Such a reading of the New Testament enables us to understand why, at one time, Jesus teaches, in accordance with the spirit of the Palestinian schools: "Blessed are the peace makers, the merciful, the meek, the reviled and persecuted, that they resist no evil, that love their enemies, that bless them that curse, and do good to them that do evil, that quickly agree with their adversaries, that pray for them that are full of hate," (2) while, at another time, he is represented as entering the Temple courtyard, where are stationed, in accordance with the laws of the land, those who sell doves for sacrifice, and who exchange money of foreign worshipers for the native money needed for tithe and offerings, and he lashes them forth unmercifully, and upsets their tables and wares. (3)

At another time, he is represented as saying, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace, but a sword. I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not

2. Mt. V.

3. Mk. XI, 15-16.

worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." (4)

At another time he is represented as saying, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (5) At another time, when told that his mother and brothers are waiting without and would speak with him, he answers: "Who is my mother and who my brothers? Only those who do the will of my Father in heaven are my brother, my sister, my mother." (6)

A considerable period of time, and a world-wide difference of spirit lies between the earlier teachings quoted and the later. The one is Jewish, the other reveals the spirit of a Roman, probably a monastic, celibate propagandist, who, in search of converts, introduces discord into families, and, for the sake of the church, justifies violence to the most sacred ties of the heart.

At one time Jesus is represented as saying: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and as bidding his disciples not to go to the Gentiles nor to enter the city of the Samaritans. (7) At another time, he is represented as saying to his disciples: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." (8)

At one time, Jesus is represented as teaching, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or tittle, shall in no wise pass from the law. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (9) Coming to the time of Paul we read of his changing some of the most fundamental of the Jewish laws, and of his doing away with others altogether, so that conversions among the Gentiles might proceed all the faster. (10)

At one time, being asked what he regarded the chief commandments of the law, Jesus answered: "The first of all the com-

4. Mt. X, 34-38.

5. St. Luke XIV, 26.

6. Mt. XII, 46-50.

7. Mt. X, 5-6.

8. Mk. XVI, 15-16.

9. Mt. V, 17-19.

10. Acts XV; Galatians II.

mandments is: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength,' this is the first commandment. And the second commandment is, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,' there is none other commandment greater than this," (11) repeating thus the Confession of Faith, which every Jew of his day recited in his daily prayers, and which the faithful recite daily to this day. Coming to St. John and to St. Paul, we are in the midst of a theology so strange and new that it has no longer the faintest semblance to the teachings concerning God in the Old Testament. God is no longer one. His only begotten son now shares His essence and power and glory, and is to be worshiped like God, the Father. "By Christ were all things created that are in heaven and earth." "He is before all things, and by him all things consist." "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father." (12) And in the gospel of St. John he is the full-fledged mediator, speaking of himself, "I am the light of the world," "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (13)

One certainly recognizes in these words little of the humility and meekness which Jesus has preached in the justly celebrated Sermon on the Mount.

And still less of his preaching of peace and forgiveness and mercifulness and patience, of non-resistance of evil, of loving the enemy, of doing good to those who do evil, of praying for those who do harm, of loving one's neighbor as oneself, do we recognize in those bitter invectives which he hurls at the Jews who will not believe in his divine origin, branding them as "children of the devil," as a people wholly cut off from God's love. (14)

And what shall we say to the insults which he, the gentle and peaceful and merciful, heaps upon the Pharisees, the noblest, the most patriotic, the most pious of his people of his day, who, at that time, counted among them some of the foremost lights and leaders of Israel, the President of whose celebrated school, at the time of the birth of Jesus, was the gentle Hillel, and whose successor as President was his son Gamaliel, a noble son of a

11. Mk. XII, 29-31.

12. Coloss. I, 15-17; II, 9; Phil. II, 9-11.

13. St. John VIII, 12; XIV, 6.

14. St. John VIII, 44.

noble sire, what shall we say of the language which Jesus is reported to have hurled at this body of men: "Ye generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" (15) "Ye hypocrites, ye blind guides, ye fools, ye whited sepulchres," (16) what else can we say than that this language never was used, never could have been used by Jesus, that it clearly reveals the hand of a later member of the church militant, of a Roman Christianized pagan, burning with wrath and fury against the Jews, of one who no longer knew who the Pharisees were, or what distinguished teachers and leaders they included, who knew not that, judging from his teaching and preaching and patriotism, Jesus himself must have been a Pharisee, must have been either a pupil of Hillel or of his son Gamaliel, or of both.

In this intense bitterness against the Pharisees the authors of it overreached themselves. So contrary to fact is this portrayal of the Pharisees—a portrayal which, through the New Testament, has, alas, acquired world-wide acceptance—that it arouses suspicion. As the public life of Jesus shows him to have been a man learned in the Law, shows him to have been titled a *Rabbi*, he must have been a pupil of one of the Pharisaic schools, the only schools of his time. Seeing that much is written about his birth and death, and not a word about his schooling, not a word about his youth and early manhood, not a word about his home-life nor about his entire career, save the opening and closing year of his life, we cannot escape the conclusion that that part of his life may have been deliberately cut out because of his indebtedness to the Pharisees. His having lived and taught as a Pharisaic Rabbi himself may have been deemed prejudicial to their fight against the Pharisees, who were the bitterest opponents to the metamorphosis of a human-born into an incarnate God, of a Judean Rabbi into a pagan Christ.

15. Mt. XII, 14.

16. Id. XXIII.

DISCOURSE II.

HILLEL AND JESUS.

We were told in the preceding discourse of the marvelous prodigies which, as the New Testament records, manifested themselves before and during and after the birth of Jesus, and which betokened the advent of the "only-begotten Son of God." Of one so wondrously ushered into life, we would naturally expect to hear wondrous things: a marvelous childhood, a youth and early manhood incomparably magnificent in achievement. Yet, for some thirty years, nothing is seen or heard or known of him, save one boyhood incident, probably of legendary origin, seeing that only one of the four gospels has knowledge of it. (17)

At last the long silence is broken with a record of public life of about one year's length, according to three of the gospels, or, of about three year's length, according to St. John, who is generally regarded the least reliable of all the biographers of Jesus. In that brief space of time, a number of beautiful lessons are taught by Jesus, identical with those taught by the Rabbis of that day. A number of miracles are reported of him, identical with those told of other illustrious men of the orient. Then follows a description of a bitter persecution of him by the chiefs of his people, which finally results in his execution. This is followed by another account of marvelous prodigies manifesting themselves after his death, witnessing to his divine origin, and proving him to be above the eternal and immutable laws of nature. Then nothing more is seen or heard of him.

The world continues as wicked as it was before his coming. Wars and bloodsheds go on for centuries. The people of Israel, from whose loins the redeemer had sprung, are subjected by the redeemed to inveterate hatred and relentless cruelty. Bitter feuds and bloody schisms spring up even within the church founded in the name of The Prince of Peace. The Dark- and Middle-Ages set in, during which independence of thought and scientific research are dealt with by followers of the Church of the Savior in the torture chambers and at the burning stakes.

17. St. Luke II, 42-52.

When so much detailed knowledge is crowded into the time immediately preceding and succeeding the birth of Jesus, and yet more into the last year, or the last three years, of his life, is it not strange that a complete blank should span the opening and closing periods of his life? Is it not strange that for thirty long years not a trace should be found of a divinely born and of a divinely commissioned Son of God? What did he do during all these thirty years? Where did he live? How did he live? Where did he study? Who were his masters?

To all these questions there is not an answer. All the records are silent. Not all the miracles told of the birth and death of Jesus are as astounding as is this silence of thirty years.

And yet it seems as if a faint trace might be found, in what may legitimately be regarded his public utterances and public work, as to what he may have done and as to where he may have been during this epoch of silence. His moral lessons, his intense Jewishness, his style of teaching, his title Rabbi, seem strongly to indicate that he must have spent many years at Jerusalem, must have sat at the feet of the celebrated teachers of that time, Hillel, or his son, Gamaliel, or both, must have been a member of their sect, the Pharisees, must have imbibed their intense national spirit and patriotism, and their eagerness to see their native land freed from the oppression of the Roman.

The better to understand why we believe him to have been a Pharisee, a pupil of Hillel or of his successor, or of both, it will be well to obtain, first, a glimpse of conditions in Palestine in general, and in Jerusalem in particular, at the time of Jesus.

Barring a few minor parties, the people of those days were divided into three distinct sects, which differed from each other as much in their attitude towards the politics of their day as in the concepts of their religion.

One of these sects was styled the *Essenes*. Their number was small, and their influence upon the currents of the time not large. They took no interest in the politics of their day, and none in public life. They were largely a monastic body. They believed that the end of the world was nigh, that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and they prepared themselves for its coming by prayer, penance and purification. They devoted much of their time to ablutions. They dressed in white, made baptism, chastity and retirement from the world requisites for admission to their order. They lived as celibates in communistic settlements. With the exception that they refused to bring sacrifices to the Temple, and to take the oath, they were rigorous formalists, placing the greatest importance upon the observance of every minutia of

the Law. Not only did they do no work on the Sabbath, but they abstained also from some of the necessary bodily needs, construing even these as work. They rejected the belief in bodily resurrection, believing in spiritual immortality instead. They interpreted the Scriptures allegorically. For a livelihood, they engaged in agriculture, and they subsisted on vegetarian diet. Some devoted themselves to healing; others enjoyed a reputation as prophets. Their beliefs and practices seem to have entered Palestine by way of Alexandria, and seem to have been a product of the religious cults of the Egyptians, Parsees, and possibly also of the Buddhists.

A far more important body, the very opposite of the Esenes, were the *Sadducees*. They constituted largely the aristocracy and the people of the world. Rome having usurped the power of appointing the High Priest, and he having the appointment of all the other priests, that body was friendly disposed toward Rome, many of whom affected Roman culture, and largely adopted Roman customs and manners. While the Sadducees included many who were a credit to their nation and faith, others of them were none too scrupulous as to how they obtained office, and as to what use they made of it. It was of that body that the publicans were largely made up, they who farmed the taxes of the land for the Roman oppressor, and who in collecting them were often as cruel as their master. In point of religion the Sadducees were hierarchial and rigidly conservative. The service and the sacrifices at the Temple being very lucrative to many of them, self-interest commanded opposition to every proposed change of the letter of the Mosaic Law. They refused to adopt even such modifications of the Law as were made necessary by changed conditions of the times. Like unto the worldly Romans of that day, they believed in no Hereafter, the present was sufficient for them. They were opposed to everything that smacked of reform, probably fearing in the reformer an agitator, and in the agitator an inciter of the people against Rome, who might jeopardize their own friendly and profitable relationship with the Romans.

By far the largest and most popular sect was that of the *Pharisees*, the party so greatly misrepresented by the Roman or Romanized portrayer of them in the New Testament. These constituted the people's party, the nationalists and patriots. They were bitterly opposed to Rome's rule over Judea, and as intense in their desire to throw off the foreigner's yoke as the Finns and Poles of our day are eager to free themselves from the tyranny of the Russian. The inroads of the pagan upon the life and cus-

toms of the people made them all the more anxious to preserve the laws and institutions and religious practices of the land. If the Sadducees, being the party favorable to the Romans, exercised the largest authority in the national Sanhedrin, the Pharisees wielded no little influence by reason of their superior number. In religion they followed a progressive tendency, the very opposite of what the New Testament represents them to have done. They enlarged and amended such of the old laws as no longer suited the altered conditions of the times. They regarded the decisions of the Rabbis as authoritative as those of the writers of the Scriptures. The intensely strained relationship between themselves and the Romans and the Roman-friendly Sadducees made them all the more loyal in their adherence to Jewish laws and institutions, some of them excessively so, as is frequently the case when—as a matter of discipline or self-preservation—to overcome too much laxity on one side, greater pressure is brought to bear upon the other side. Having little or no authority in Temple matters, owing to the superior ecclesiastical power of the Sadducees, their influence was all the stronger in the synagogues throughout the land. It was they who maintained and presided over the national schools and the college at the capital, the heads of which were the most learned men of their day, the foremost of whom, at the time of the birth and earlier years of Jesus, was Rabbi Hillel.

Not all the misrepresentations of the Pharisees, with which the gospels fairly bristle, have succeeded in tarnishing the lustre of this celebrated teacher in Israel. In him excellence of character vied for supremacy with profundity of scholarship. It was his heart as much as his mind that attracted pupils and followers from far and near. So loudly echoes, in the writings of those days, his fame for sweetness of character, for gentleness of disposition, for patience and forbearance, for kindness and piety, that a number of scholarly writers have advanced the theory that the original character-sketch of Jesus was but a pen-picture of Hillel, so alike are the two in character and teaching, in making religion stand for life and not for law, in making faith to be an aid and not a burden to man.

If the hypothesis that Jesus and Hillel are identical characters be impossible of substantiation at the present time, because of insufficient data at our command, there seems to be considerable ground for our belief that Jesus must have been a pupil of Hillel, or of his distinguished son and successor, Gamaliel, an echo of whose kindness resounds in the New Testament (18),

18. Acts V, 34-39.

whilst not a sound is heard of Hillel, the illustrious founder and head of the family, the greatest personage in the life and literature of the Jews of that day.

Hillel was born in Babylon, of humble parentage, about three score years prior to the birth of Jesus. His eagerness for study brought him to Jerusalem, where he spent the rest of his life, and where he died in ripe, old age. He encountered many hardships, at first, in satisfying his craving for knowledge, but, by dint of hard work and perseverance, he rose, step by step, to the foremost rank in the student body, and finally to the presidency of the college.

Many are the important decisions of law that are recorded of Hillel and of his disciples, but, interesting and profitable as a discussion of them might prove at other times, here we are chiefly concerned with the ethical teachings of the school of Hillel, whence went forth many of the greatest teachers and leaders of that time. This may enable us to judge the better whether or not the spirit and teaching of Jesus were those of the School of Hillel, and whether the Pharisees were the "vipers," the "hypocrites," the "whited sepulchres," the "fools," which, according to the gospels, Jesus accused them of having been.

The keynote of the ethical and religious teaching of Hillel may be found in an incident recorded of that day. A heathen approached Hillel, and asked him whether he could teach him the religion of Israel while he stood upon one foot. Notwithstanding that the question was asked in a spirit of levity, Hillel gently replied: "In the words 'What is displeasing to thee, that do not unto another,' lies the root of Judaism, all else is commentary." We have in this answer the original of the Golden Rule, given in the negative form, which, sociologically and psychologically, is the more correct, and in which form it is found in the recently discovered "Teachings of the Twelve Apostles", a document older perhaps than any of the gospels.

The spirit of the Golden Rule of Hillel is the spirit that pervades all his teachings. He is always the saint and sage. When he speaks of God he speaks of a kind and merciful Father. God wants man to be pious. "If thou comest to My house," Hillel makes God to declare, "I will come to thine, but, if thou enterest not Mine, I shall not enter thine." But, far better, says Hillel, not to be pious at all than to content oneself with one's piety, and to suffer others to perish in their impiety. He wants men to recognize not only their dependence on God but also their dependence on each other, and therefore live in peace and mutual helpfulness. "Do not separate thyself from thy fellow-men,"

says he, thou hast need of them, they of thee. He recognizes that each is primarily responsible for his own well-being. "If I am not for myself," he asks, "who will be? But, if I am only for myself, what am I? And if I do not concern myself about my fellow-being now, when shall I?"

The love of peace and the pursuit of it, he recommends as of greater value than all other earthly possession. "Judge no man," says he, "until thou art in his place," perhaps in his plight or under his temptation thou mightst have done as he did. "Trust not thyself till the day of thy death," thou art but flesh, and flesh is weak. "Who increases flesh increases worms; who increases riches increases care; who increases knowledge of the law increases life." Above all things, says he, be humble. Let thy humility be thy exaltation, lest thy exaltation become thy humiliation. Whoever strives for glory strives but for dust and ashes. Whoever would make a name, loses it; whoever would acquire wisdom for gain, acquires neither wisdom nor gain.

While recommending helpful intercourse with the world, he warns against such an absorption in it as may make us forget that our soul has claims on us which are as sacred as those of our fellowmen. He would have us set aside frequent hours for lustrations of our body and for communion with our soul. The Rabbis before him had taught: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath," to which he adds: "not only the Sabbath but every day of the week is holy."

He would have man make the study of the law of God his chief avocation. Knowledge of God means knowledge of right and duty. He who is ignorant of the law of God is without protection against sin. Where men teach, be eager to learn; where men are eager to learn be no less eager to teach. He counsels faith in God and trust in retribution. Seeing, one day, a skull floating upon the surface of the water, he spake: "Because thou didst drown some one, some one drowned thee, and, in the end, the one that drowned thee will be drowned."

It is in his pupils, and he had many of them during the forty years of his presidency, and in the pupils of his pupils, where Hillel shows himself to best advantage. Many of them attained to exalted positions and leadership, and their words were sacredly treasured, and faithfully preserved in the literature of their day. Finding among their teachings, and among those of their pupils, and pupils' pupils, many that, in part or in whole, are identical with sayings of Jesus, we have little difficulty in concluding whence were derived the spirit and largely also the language of what originally were known as the *Logia of Jesus* (Say-

ings of Jesus), before they were tampered with and expanded and adulterated by later propagandists.

Let me cull for you a few of the sayings from the literature of the Rabbis of that age, that you may compare them, at your leisure, with such of the teachings of Jesus contained in the gospels, which may reasonably be regarded as his own, and then you may judge for yourselves whence their spirit was derived (19):

"Love and mercy, charity and justice are more acceptable unto God than sacrifice."

"Where godly people are there is God."

"He who fears sin more than he loves knowledge, his knowledge will abide; he who loves knowledge more than he fears sin, his knowledge will pass away."

"Lessen the sorrows of others, and thou wilt lessen thine own."

"Let thy fear of offending God be as great as thy fear of offending man, and thou wilt not easily be led to sin."

"He who possesseth a good heart possesseth the greatest of all treasures."

"Rather than that thou persecute, be persecuted; rather than that thou revile, be reviled."

"Let your yay be yay, and your nay, nay."

"Say not one thing with thy mouth, and mean another thing in thine heart."

"Better not to give alms at all than to give it publicly and to shame the receiver."

"He who judges his neighbor charitably will himself be charitably judged."

"With what measure a man meteth will it be measured unto him."

"Remove the beam from thine own eye before thou findest fault with the splinter in thy neighbor's eye."

"Before thou reproveth another see that thyself be spotless."

"To him that hath shall be given, from him that hath not shall be taken away."

"Three things there are that bear fruit in this world and in the world to come: Honor of parents and fellowmen; Hospitality to strangers and wayfarers; Making peace between contending parties."

19. See author's "A Rabbi's Impression of the Oberammergau Passion Play," chapter "Talmudic Parallels to New Testament Teachings."

"There is nothing as good as silence."

"Not the study of the law but the practice is the principal thing."

"The world rests upon three things: justice, truth and peace."

"He who considereth that there is an All-seeing Eye and an All-hearing Ear, and that all his actions are recorded, is not easily led to sin."

"An envious and avaricious eye and evil thoughts are death to a man."

"Where there is no law, there is no morality, where no morality, there no law; where there is no wisdom there is no reverence, where no reverence, there no wisdom."

"Who is wise? He who is willing to receive instruction from all men. Who is strong? He who conquers his evil inclinations."

"Who is rich? He who rejoices in his lot. Who is honorable? He who honors his fellow-kind."

"When thou prayest let thy words be few."

The following are supplications contained in the prayers of the Rabbis of that age: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed and glorified be Thy name. May Thy unity be everywhere proclaimed, and Thy kingdom be established forever. Thine is the greatness and the power, Thine the glory and majesty. May Thy will be done; what seemeth best in Thine eyes that do Thou do. Give us bread to eat and raiment to put on. Save us from the power of sin, keep us from yielding to temptation. May the peace of Heaven be the reward of those who reverence Thee on earth."

These moral teachings, culled at random from the literature of the Rabbis of that age, amply suffice to show not only whence Jesus derived the spirit of those of his teachings which may reasonably be regarded as his own, not only that he was a pupil either of Hillel or of a pupil of that master, but also that he was a Pharisee. He could not have been an Essene, for he did not separate himself from his fellow-kind, lived not as a recluse, did not believe in rigid observance of every minutia of the law, neither did he believe that the Sabbath had been instituted to be a burden to man. He could not have been a Sadducee, for he believed in the right of the Rabbis to amend the law to suit altered conditions. He was opposed to the rigid and self-interested conservatism of the priesthood. He was opposed to a party that saw in the grave the end of all and nothing beyond. And the subse-

quent events proved that he certainly was no friend of the Romans.

He could have been a Pharisee only. Every word of his teachings, every move of his martyrdom, proves him of that sect. The New Testament itself, notwithstanding later tamperings and hostile additions, could not entirely obliterate the original account of Jesus as a Pharisee, and his having been on the best of terms with that sect. Their synagogues are open to him, and in them he officiates (20). He is guest at the homes of Pharisees (21), albeit a later hand of the church militant makes him violate the hospitality extended. He is told by Pharisees to flee for his life when Herodians are seeking to destroy him (22). It is he who says to the multitude and to his disciples, "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat. All things, therefore, whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe." (23) The bitter attack that immediately follows these words is only too palpably an addition by the hand of a later enemy of the Jews.

He had probably spent his earlier years in his native town of Nazareth, in the northern province of Galilee, following his father's trade, that of a carpenter. His earlier education he probably received, in common with other children of his town, in the local Jewish schools. Galilee, located between Samaria and Phoenicia and Syria, was somewhat of a frontier province, whose schools and speech did not enjoy much of a reputation. But what that province lacked in education it amply compensated in intensity of patriotism. It did not possess that fear of Rome which the southern province of Judea possessed, in whose capital, Jerusalem, the Roman legions were stationed. Its mountainous environments made its people natural lovers of freedom, and intense haters of Rome which held them in bondage. It was in Galilee, and under Galilean leaders, that a number of seditions against Rome took their rise.

In course of time, he must have made his way to Jerusalem, as had Hillel, and must have become a pupil of its college. After completing his studies, he must have returned to his native province, and become an itinerant preacher. His magnetic personality and beautiful teaching gathered around him a number of enthusiastic followers. They became the more fascinated by him

20. Matt. XII, 9; XIII, 54; Mark I, 21-39. St. Luke IV, 16-20.

21. St. Luke VII, 36; XI, 37; XIV, 1.

22. St. Luke XIII, 31.

23. Mt. XXIII, 1-3.

the more they saw of the cures he effected in those days of nervous excitements, when, by reason of excessive fears and sufferings, many minds became unstrung, believing themselves possessed of evil spirits, to expel which—seeing that they never existed—was not a difficult task for one like Jesus, whose spirituality and kindness awed and soothed the patient. The same was done before; the same is being done to-day.

Daily suffrance from the tyranny of the Roman must have awakened in some of his enthusiastic followers the belief that their wise and godly and beloved master was their expected Messiah, that he was the divinely appointed to free the land of Israel from the hated heathen rule. The delusion of the disciples in the end deluded the master. Unacquainted with the power of Rome, and the vigilance of its procurator, accompanied by a band of unarmed, barefooted peasants and fishermen and artisans, they made a triumphal entry into the capital, and proclaimed their master "King of the Jews." (24) That very night Pontius Pilate, the most cruel of all the procurators, nailed the newly acclaimed king upon the cross, in accordance with the custom of the Romans. And partly in mockery, and partly as a warning to other would-be kings, he wrote over the head of the crucified martyr the Latin words: JESUS NAZARENUS REX JUDAEORUM (Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews). (25)

Only one cry, a cry of agony, has come down to us from that horrible night, the cry of a suffering, dying, disappointed martyr: "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTANI!" ("My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?") (26)

At times, when looking upon him that was crucified because of his love for his country and people, and when observing the expression of agony upon his face, and thinking, thinking, upon what that crucifixion by the hand of the Roman has meant, and still means, for the Jew, I seem to see those long-silent lips open, and to hear once more that heart-rending cry "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTANI!" ("My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?") "Why have I who loved my people better than my life, why have I been made the cause of their infinite suffering, the cause of countless crucifixions and martyrdoms of my brethren, in almost every country which either worships me or worships in my name?"

24. Mk. XI, 1-9.

25. Mt. XXVII, 27.

26. Mt. XXVII, 46.

It is for the Christian, and not for the Jew, to answer this question from the cross.

But the question is not answered, or, if answered, the reply is not in consonance with facts of history.

Ours, therefore, is the duty to answer how it came about that the beloved teacher and leader and acclaimed "King of the Jews" was made to appear, after his death, the hated and persecuted and crucified by the Jews.

DISCOURSE III.

PHILO AND JESUS.

In our last discourse, entitled "Hillel and Jesus," we endeavored to trace a rational story of the life of Jesus, as distinguished from the supernatural one recorded in the New Testament. We endeavored to show that he had probably been a student at the college in Jerusalem, a pupil of the great Hillel or his successor Gamaliel, that, after completing his studies, he had taken up the life of an itinerant preacher in Galilee, and that his beautiful teaching and lovable character had attached a number of disciples to him. In time, his followers had deluded themselves into the belief that the Nazarene Rabbi was their expected Messiah. Their delusion had deluded their master. They had made a treasonable entry into Jerusalem, at a time when Judea was tributary to Rome. They had publicly proclaimed him "King of the Jews," a proclamation which the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate, had speedily answered by having the acclaimed "king" seized, and, according to Roman custom, nailed upon the cross.

For a while the disciples were stunned, as well they might have been. Eagerly they had looked forward to a redemption of their land and people from the bondage of the cruel Roman, only to see all their hopes ended upon the cross.

But gradually they recovered themselves. The catastrophe, they argued, that had happened had perhaps been divinely decreed. They had had in mind one kind of a Messiah; God, however, had purposed another kind. He, whom they mourned as dead, had come not to restore an earthly kingdom but establish the kingdom of Heaven, and had but temporarily departed to get it in readiness. Before long, he will make a second advent and lead the faithful into Heaven.

And so they got themselves ready for the second coming of their master. They lived in communistic settlements, and spent much time in prayer. They dismissed all worldly thoughts from their minds, gave no care to money or property, seeing that these would be of no use to them in the heavenly kingdom which they were about to enter. (27)

The second advent of Jesus protracted. Some began to lose hope; others, to strengthen their faith, began to turn to Scriptures for verification of their expectation. Those were not the

27. Acts II, 44-45; IV, 33-37.

days when households owned printed copies of the Bible. The few copies that existed were in manuscript, guardedly and sacredly kept in the synagogues, and read and expounded by scholars only. The lay-people in general had but a hearing acquaintance with the Scriptures, and only memory to rely upon for what they had heard. Neither were those the days when people had a knowledge of the true history of the times and of the real meaning of the prophets' dreams and metaphors, contained in Bible passages written many centuries earlier. Bible criticism and comparative studies had not yet been born then. Even now, average lay-people are incompetent to interpret Bible passages in the light of the times and conditions under which they were written; how much more then, with insufficient copies of the Scriptures, insufficient scholarship and critical acumen on the part of the Galilean peasant-folks, was it impossible for the loyal, yet simple-minded followers of Jesus to interpret the Scriptures aright.

The wish being father of the thought, the Bible suddenly teemed with prophecies of Jesus. Wherever they turned they found him announced; whatever he had said and did had been in accordance with what had been predicted he would say and do. What mattered it to them that violence was done to history and geography, to philology and grammar! Those were credulous and not critical times, and the results thus obtained satisfied their preconceived judgments. Moreover, during the social unrest and political tyrannies, and nervous excitements, which preceded the final overthrow of Judea, the mind was in no condition for sober judgment. A wave of mysticism had swept over the land. Nothing was too incredible for belief. All sorts of strange conceits had percolated into Palestine from Egypt, Persia, Chaldea, Syria, and had given rise to a wild and weird literature, to apocalypses, Sibylline prophecies, dreams, visions, which had made powerful impressions upon the minds of the people. In addition, the faulty Greek translation of the Bible, which had been made in Alexandria—of which we shall speak later—and the liberties that were taken with its text by Hellenic expounders and commentators, likewise found their way to Palestine, and brought their influence to bear upon people finding in the Bible whatever they went thither to find.

And so we see the gradual rise among these pious but simple-minded Nazarenes of a Messiah conception wholly unlike that which the prophets had dreamed. He is no longer a political emancipator but a spiritual inaugurator of the Kingdom of Heaven. To fulfil prophecies, he is made to have been born in Bethlehem instead of Nazareth; a Davidian ancestry is assigned

to him; he is made to perform a number of astounding miracles; verses, meaning wholly different things, are twisted into betokening "a suffering Messiah," one who takes upon himself the sins of others, makes an atonement of himself, dies vicariously, so that through him others may live the life everlastingly.

We have in this "the first contribution" towards the transformation of the Galilean Rabbi and patriot into a supernatural being. It is quite harmless as yet, and, in all probability, it would never have played very much of a part, had it not received a powerful impetus from a quarter far beyond the confines of Palestine.

Let us leave this faithful band of Nazarenes to their fond dreams and fancies, and betake ourselves to the city of Alexandria by the sea. It is a wonderful city which we enter. The more than three hundred years that have passed since it came into being more than realized the fond dreams that Alexander, the Great, had cherished, when he founded that city and determined it to be the capital of his new empire. Located almost at the juncture of three continents, it became the metropolis of the world. There was concentrated the world's commerce. There was the seat of its highest scholarship. Nowhere in the world was there such a library, such a museum, such laboratories, observatories and schools. There the culture of the orient and occident had met and had ushered in a new civilization.

In not one of all the Jewish colonies of that day, and there were many of them, did the Jews flourish as they did in Alexandria. The kindness, which the founder of that city had shown to the Jews when he settled them there, was continued by his successors, the Ptolemies. Engaged for many centuries in agriculture, Alexandria tried them in manufacture and commerce, and found them as skilled in making Egypt an emporium of trade as their husbandry hitherto had made their own country a land overflowing with milk and honey. The land that had been a house of bondage to their fathers had truly become to them a house of freedom. They enjoyed full rights of citizenship, and occupied positions of highest trust in the government. They numbered a million souls in Egypt, and occupied two of the five districts of Alexandria. They had their own Sanhedrin, and, besides a large and costly Temple, they possessed numerous synagogues.

Not only physically but intellectually as well, the Jews flourished under the stimulus of the Greek culture of Alexandria. They became eager students of Grecian literature and philosophy, and, in time, acquired distinguished mastery in both. Greek became their tongue as much by preference as by necessity. But,

the greater their love of Greek, the lesser grew their knowledge of Hebrew.

Yet, even though preferring the Greek to their own tongue, they continued loyal to their faith. In fact, they made every effort to present their faith in the best possible light to the Grecian, and to show that there was nothing great and glorious in Greek literature and philosophy and religion that had not been taught long before by Moses and the Prophets.

To do this more effectively, and to supply themselves at the same time with an adequate substitute for their waning knowledge of the Bible, owing to their loss of the Hebrew tongue, they were instrumental in having the Bible translated into Greek, which translation is known as the *Septuagint*.

The Rabbis of Palestine possessed no such knowledge of the Greek as might have enabled them to see to it that the translation was correct, both in letter and spirit. And so the translating was done by Alexandrians, who, having gained much of the Greek spirit and lost much of the Hebrew spirit, blended Hellenism with Hebraism to the disadvantage of both, and turned out a very faulty translation. While one eye of the translator was upon the translation, the other seemed to have been on the Grecian public which was to read it, and possibly to be convinced by it,—as in reality did happen later, only differently than had been anticipated.

Desirous to present Jewish teachings in a most favorable light, they introduce no end of modifications. They undertake to fill in gaps, to correct what they consider exaggerations, inconsistencies, contradictions. They even alter historical and doctrinal parts, if these do not suit their tastes.

At times, they are guilty of errors which are doubly serious because of absurd Christological teachings that were later derived from them. To give one or two illustrations of the method they pursued; the words "And the earth was void and formless" they translate "and the earth was unseen" to harmonize with Plato's teaching that all things existed first as "ideas," "unseen," and out of this was later twisted the meaning that Jesus existed from eternity, "unseen" at first, until he chose to make himself seen. The words in Jeremiah (28) "Let us destroy the tree with its fruit" they translate "Let us cast the wood into his bread," which later Fathers of the Church interpreted to mean "Let us cast the cross into the body of Christ." The words in the Psalms (29) "The righteous shall flourish as a palm-tree,"

28. Jeremiah XI, 19.

29. Psalms XCII, 12.

they translate, "the righteous shall flourish like a PHOENIX," mistaking the word "phoenix," a "palm-tree" to mean a "phoenix," an Indian bird, and deriving from the popular allegory, meaning sunset and sunrise, proof for a belief in the resurrection and virgin-birth of Jesus.

Encouraged by such blunders and liberties on the part of the translators, later hands made other alterations to suit other Christological purposes, a notable illustration being the addition to Psalm XCVI, 10, where to the words "Say among the nations: the Lord reigneth" they added the words "from the wood," and which was interpreted to mean: "Say to the nations: Christ reigneth from the cross." When the Jews objected to such unwarranted liberties with the Old Testament Text, the Christologist replied that the Septuagint translation is correct, and that the Jews themselves corrupted their own Hebrew text, so as to expunge references to Christ.

Much as the translation was condemned in Palestine, the Alexandrian Jews regarded it equal in holiness to the Hebrew text, and read it at their public services. They devote themselves to its study and interpretation with great zeal, and none more so than Philo, the Jewish philosopher of Alexandria.

He was a remarkable man, this Philo Judaeus. He was born about 25 B. C. E., and lived till about the middle of the first century. He was of priestly descent, of a distinguished family, and a man of large means. But, above everything else, he was a scholar, and was regarded the greatest philosopher of his age. He had a large acquaintance with the philosophical literature of his day, and wielded a classical pen. His heart was as noble as his mind was clever, and he enjoyed the universal esteem of his fellowmen, regardless of creed or nationality. His Judaism was broad; his spirit was tolerant; his regard for the creed of others as reverential as was that for his own. He was as loyal a Greek as he was a Jew. While he did some historical and apologetic writing, Bible interpretation was his specialty, and to it he devoted himself with remarkable industry. He is said to have written forty-seven volumes, ten of which have survived to this day.

His life's ambition was to win, on the one side, his brethren to his philosophical conception of Judaism, and, on the other side, to win the Grecian's admiration for the Jewish Bible, and, through it, esteem for the Jew. To do this effectively, he undertook the well nigh impossible task of harmonizing Jewish belief with Hellenic culture, of making the teachings of the oriental Jew acceptable to the occidental Greek. If he attained any success at all,

it was because there was infinitely more of the Grecian spirit in his writing than of the Jewish, and later events proved that, instead of leading the pagan to Judaism, he had but opened a passage way for the Jew into paganism.

He availed himself of the allegorical method, a style then largely in vogue among the Grecians. The old Greek philosophers had undermined the Grecian faith in the gods and goddesses of Homer and his successors. The people being fond of these mythological stories and unwilling to abandon them, the new philosophers came to their rescue by claiming that these stories never had been intended by the ancient poets to be taken literally, that they were but allegories, descriptions of one thing under the image of another, poetic personifications of forces of nature, that, when they say Kronos swallowed his children, they mean: time swallows the hours; that, when they speak of Apollo pursuing Aurora, they mean: the full-risen sun chases the dawn before it; that, when they tell of Pluto carrying off Proserpine and keeping her underground for a time, they mean: summer is overpowered by winter and kept down till restored in the spring.

This was the method which Philo employed for his great work. The Bible must by no means be understood literally, said he. Behind the literal sense a spiritual sense is always to be found. For seemingly common things transcendent truths are to be substituted. Like the Greek poets, the Biblical authors, too, had employed the allegorical method, had described one thing under the image of another. Where we read names, he says, we should not think of them as persons, but as personifications of faculties, virtues, attributes, and the like.

When we read "God planted a Paradise in Eden," we are to understand "God implanted virtue in the human race." The "tree of life" is to be understood as meaning "goodness." The "four streams," into which the river of Eden divided, are to be understood as meaning the "four cardinal virtues." The forming of a rib into a woman means the transposition of the outward senses to the mind. The "five cities" of the Plain are the "five senses." Moses is but another name for Intelligence, Aaron for Speech, Noah for Righteousness. Abraham stands for virtue acquired by learning, Jacob for virtue acquired through struggle, Lot stands for sensuality, Esau for disobedience, Rachel for innocence. (30)

Reaching the God-conception, he lays down the rule that God must never be understood anthropomorphically, that is, as pos-

30. For further illustrations, see Farrar "History of Interpretation," Lecture III.

sessing human powers or faculties. While we know "that" God is, we do not know "what" God is. It is absurd in the extreme to think of God going to and fro, or of speaking with man, or coming in any way in contact with man. Being the Absolutely Perfect and Pure, He could not come in touch with imperfect and impure matter without becoming contaminated. He therefore employs innumerable agencies between Himself and the world, mediators between Himself and man, forces that are emanations from Himself, and entirely spiritual.

The chief of these is the "Logos," which is the Greek for "word." It was by the "Logos," the "Word," that God brought the universe into being, by it he created man, by it He communicates with man, by it man approaches the throne of God. This "Logos" it was that appeared to Hagar, that destroyed Sodom, that wrestled with Jacob, that spoke to Moses from the burning bush, that came to Balaam, that led Israel through the wilderness. It is the mediator between God and man. It pleads for him; it intercedes for him. It ministers at the throne of God like unto a chief officer at an earthly court. It is the "helper," the "comforter," the "high priest," the "image of God," the "first-born of God," a "second God."

All this is very strange teaching. Yet, as an expression in the gradual evolution of the God-conception, it is quite interesting. If strange, it certainly seems harmless, one of those illusory ventures into the realm of abstract theology of which the history of philosophy is full.

But, we are soon disillusioned as to its harmlessness when we turn to the gospel of St. John, and, as its very prologue, read:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. . . . No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (31)

To such Christological uses were turned, a hundred years later, the fanciful abstractions of Philo. His philosophy had sought to remove theology from the realm of anthropomorphism, yet, about the middle of the second century of the present era,

when the gospel of St. John was written, anthropomorphism fairly rioted in Christology. Philo's abstraction had become a personality. A mere figure of speech had become a reality. A mere spiritual term, employed to convey the idea of divine creative force and divine providence, had assumed flesh and bone, had descended upon earth as the Christ, the Mediator, the Intercessor, the only-begotten Son of God. And the Christ-conception thus derived was made to stand for Jesus, the son of Joseph and Mary, the Rabbi and patriot of Nazareth.

Thus were rewarded the labors of Philo Judaeus, the labors of him who had toiled as few had toiled before or since to win the pagans' esteem for Judaism, and possibly also their acceptance of it. Instead of winning the non-Jew, his writings were made to serve only as a deep-entering wedge into the Jewish body, which it split into two, and sent half into the then forming Christological faith.

Not even in his most fanciful flights could he have dreamed of such a possibility. Though he was a contemporary of Jesus and had visited Jerusalem, his writings nowhere show that he had known or heard of Jesus or his disciples, or that he had even thought of a Messiah. We can conceive of no sorrow greater than that which he would have felt, had any one foretold him to what uses his Bible commentaries would be put after his death. For he had loved Judaism as few have loved it, was of nothing so much convinced as of the spiritual superiority of Moses and the prophets over all other philosophers and teachers, was of nothing so proud as of being a son of the chosen people of God. In behalf of his people, he had made a journey to Rome, even in his old age, to move emperor Caligula to rescind his order that an imperial statue be reared in the Jewish Temple of Alexandria, and that divine honors be shown it.

Alas, he, who had bitterly condemned the worship of images of gods or men, was innocently made to help, after his death, to bring into existence that new faith that decorated its churches with images and worshiped them. Little wonder, that those of his brethren who continued true to the faith turned from his writings, and, up to the sixteenth century, would have nothing to do with them. Little wonder, that the writings of Philo which we now possess came down to us through Christian hands. Little wonder, that, at one time, he was declared to have been a Christian himself.

And yet, notwithstanding the large use that was made of the "Logos" conception of Philo, and of the Messianic fancies of the disciples of Jesus, in the establishment of Christianity, both their

teachings would have availed little, and the new church would never have been established, had it not been for the art and energy of Paul in combining the two, and in presenting them as a new gospel to the Gentiles.

DISCOURSE IV.

PAUL AND JESUS.

In our preceding discourses we spoke of the attitude of the Jewish people toward Jesus, of their esteem of him as one of the noblest of their Rabbis and martyrs. We next spoke of the unfortunate *Messiah* delusion which led Jesus into the hand of the cruel Roman, of this delusion growing, after the crucifixion, into an article of faith, of the liberties that were taken with the Old Testament in order to give that belief a scriptural warrant. We then spoke of the impetus that was given to this mode of Scripture interpretation, first, by the faulty translation of the Bible into Greek, which thereafter became the standard text among the Jewish colonies in the Greco-Roman empire, and, secondly, by Philo's allegorical method of Bible interpretation, his personifications of philosophical concepts being translated by literalists into personalities, the naturally born Galilean Jesus being turned into a superhuman being, a deity, a heaven-descended Son of God.

Now we are to speak of Paul, who moulded these beliefs into a creed, who spread that creed far and wide, and who thus became the founder of Christianity.

Properly to understand the epochal labors of this apostle, we must first have some comprehension of the settlements of Jews at the time of which we treat. Probably as many Jews lived outside of Palestine, at the time of Jesus, as within. They were to be met everywhere in Asia, and in parts of Africa, Asia-Minor and Europe, more especially along and near the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. From the very first, the small confines of Palestine, and its limited area of fertile soil, and its increasing population, made frequent emigration necessary. Captivity and exile did more in the way of dispersing Israel. As far back as the eighth century before the common era, the Assyrian conquest had scattered ten tribes of Israel; and, in the sixth century, the Babylonian conqueror carried the best part of the remaining two tribes into captivity, from which but comparatively few returned. There was a Jewish settlement in Egypt as far back as the time of Jeremiah. To it were added the colonies founded by Alexander, the Great, and by the Ptolemies, so that, at the time of which we speak, it had grown to a million souls. The final struggles between Judea and Rome scattered countless numbers of Jews as

fugitives, prisoners and slaves, and, in the end, shut out the Jews altogether from Palestine. The Jewish colony at Rome itself, at the time of Jesus, numbered some ten thousand souls, and was almost entirely made up of emancipated prisoners. Many of the Jewish colonies in Italy, Greece, Spain, Gaul, Germany, were of similar origin.

There is yet another matter of which we must have some knowledge, before discussing the founding of the Christian Church, and that is: the considerable spread of Judaism among the pagans of the Greco-Roman empire, before Paul entered upon the scene. Many of the pagans of that time, were creedless. For them faith in the old Homeric myths had passed away, and no new faith had taken its place. While the Grecian and Roman philosophers satisfied the few, the masses, both of the upper and the lower classes, had nothing to satisfy their heart's yearning for a sustaining faith. The age being one of wars and tyrannies, of riotous luxuries and corruptions, the need of a restraining and an uplifting religion was all the more painfully felt. The people seized with avidity upon almost any faith that promised light and guidance. The Egyptian, the Phoenician, the Persian, and other religions, readily obtained large numbers of proselytes, and none more so than the Jewish.

The eagerness with which the pagans accepted Judaism encouraged not a few of the Jews to enter actively upon Judaizing, a course quite contrary to that pursued by the Jews up to that time. With the Greek Bible in their hand, and with the Greek and Latin tongue at their command, they felt that they were in a position to make themselves understood and appreciated by the pagans among whom they lived. Josephus tells us

"Many of the Greeks have been converted to the observance of our laws. . . . For a long time a great amount of zeal has been displayed for our worship; nor is there a single town among Greeks or barbarians or any where else, not a single nation, to which the observance of the Sabbath, as it exists among ourselves, has not penetrated."

Philo, too, and a number of Latin writers, such as Tacitus, Cicero, Horace, Juvenal, Seneca, and the Greek historian, Dio Cassius, bear ample testimony to this truth. The large number of converts included some of the foremost men and women of that time, such as the royal house of Adiabene, Flavius Clemens and Fulvia, wife of Senator Saturninus, both cousins of Emperor Domitian. These conversions are all the more remarkable when we bear in mind that Judaism possessed none of those accessories of imagery and sensuous rites that made other religious cults

attractive. What drew the cultured pagan to Judaism was its teaching of an invisible and incorporeal God, its laws of morality, its Sabbath, its protection of the poor, its teaching of equality between all men before God and before the law.

Judging from the activity of the Judaizers of that age, and from the success they attained, there is good reason to believe that Judaism might have been the dominant faith, had it not been for the calamitous death-struggle between Judea and Rome, which commenced about the time of the death of Jesus and endured for a century, which completely crushed the Jewish nation, which sent vast numbers of the remnant of a once populous land either as victims into the arenas, for combats with gladiators or wild beasts, or as slaves into the mines, and which, henceforth, made the very name of Jew odious to the Roman.

Yet, in a measure, Judaism did become the dominant faith of the world, and a Jew did accomplish that gigantic feat, and that Jew was Paul.

A stronger personality than Paul has probably never lived. His name was Saul, and it was converted into Paul, the Greek for *little*, probably because of his littleness in stature. But, if small in size, he was large in zeal, larger yet in daring, and largest in achievement. Even when we eliminate the many legends that cluster about his name in the *Acts of the Apostles* and in subsequent writings, there is enough left to stamp him one of the greatest men of his age.

According to legend, he makes his entrance upon the world's stage as a persecutor of the Nazarenes, although history teaches that the latter and the other Jews lived peacefully side by side, worshiped the same God in the same Temple, complied with the same ceremonial, buried in the same cemetery,—the only difference between them and the other Jews being that, while the Nazarenes believed that Jesus had been the Messiah, the others continued to hope and pray for a political redeemer. According to legend, a vision was vouchsafed to him, in which Jesus appeared to him and converted him from a persecutor to a follower. Subsequent events make clear why this vision was invented: it served as his authority for taking his place as an apostle among those who had been personal disciples of the Nazarene master.

He was born, of Jewish parentage, at Tarsus, a Grecian town, under Roman rule, in Asia Minor, about a dozen years after the birth of Jesus. The schools of his birth-place enjoyed quite a reputation. According to his own statement, he had also attended the school of the illustrious Gamaliel, at Jerusalem. The advantages of Hebrew and Greek and Roman culture stood him in

good stead in the work in which he engaged among these three peoples. The style and reasoning displayed in his *Epistles* incline one to the belief that he acquired more of what was faulty in both systems of education than of what constituted their chief merits. His reasoning is generally obscure, and frequently illogical. He is seldom the ethical teacher, but he is the theologian always, and often the dogmatist and mystic. He is fond of argument, and has unbounded faith in his mission and doctrines. In censuring the Galatians for forsaking his doctrines for those of a rival apostle, he says that, if any man preach any other gospel than that which he preached, even if an angel from heaven should preach to them otherwise than he had preached, let that one be accursed. (32)

Whatever the historical nexus was that joined Paul to the Nazarenes, they never made a more illustrious convert. But a little observation on his part sufficed to convince him that, unless a radical departure was made by the Nazarenes from the course they had hitherto pursued, there would be no new church with Jesus for its head. Their master had been dead for some time, and yet, the number of his followers counted but a few hundred. The almost unanimous refusal on the part of the Jews to accept Jesus as their Messiah held out little chance for successful propaganda among that people.

If the new party was to grow, its only chance lay among the Gentiles, and if the Gentiles were to accept the new faith a "give and take" policy would have to be pursued. They would have to be permitted to retain many of their pagan beliefs and practices and be dispensed from compliance with certain Jewish ceremonials that were distasteful to them, such as the observance of the Sabbath and other holy days, the dietary laws and the rite connected with the entrance into the Abrahamic covenant. Some of the pagan myths would have to be harmonized with personifications of the new *Logos*—teaching of Philo. As to his authority for so radical a departure he asked no question. The end he sought justified, in his eyes, the means to be employed. If he could get the Gentiles to accept the Jewish Messiah, he could well afford to have them discard the Jewish ceremonial law.

No sooner was this plan conceived by him than he entered upon its execution. Forth he went as the "*Apostle of the Gentiles*," and labored with a zeal that has probably never been equaled in the history of proselytism. In part, he found the way prepared by the Judaizing work that had been going on for some

32. Galatians I, 8-9.

time, and by the gradual blending of Grecian and Jewish religious thought which the *Septuagint* and Philo's interpretation of it had inaugurated.

Reports of Paul's labors and methods and successes soon reached the original disciples at Jerusalem. They were amazed at these proceedings of an unauthorized apostle. Who and what was he that he should arrogate unto himself the right to add new teachings and to abrogate old ones? Had not they toiled with their Master when he was yet alive? Did not they know their Master's views and wishes better than this stranger who had never seen Jesus? Had not they heard their Master tell them that he had but come to the lost sheep of Israel, and that they should confine their labors to these, and not go among the Gentiles and Samaritans? Had they not heard their Master say that as long as heaven and earth shall endure not a jot or tittle shall pass away from the Law of Moses and the Prophets? Had they not seen the Master himself comply with the Jewish ceremonial law, and here comes a self-appointed apostle, and with a sweep of his hand brushes it out of existence? Did not they know their Master to have been the son of Joseph and Mary, was not their Master's brother one of their number, how dared this new apostle, therefore, promulgate the blasphemous teaching of an only begotten Son of God?

They summoned Paul to appear before them at Jerusalem, to answer for his unwarranted proceedings. At the same time they sent messengers to such as had been converted by him, with instructions that, unless they complied with the Jewish ceremonial law, they could not be saved. The disciples might have spared themselves the trouble, had they but understood that, what was easy of observance, and even pleasant, for those reared in Judean lands and under the Jewish dispensations, was very difficult and very distasteful to the Gentiles; that Paul, having himself been bred under Grecian and Roman influences, under the spirit of the *Septuagint* and its Grecian interpreters, was in a better position than the Palestinian disciples to judge what could make the new faith attractive to pagans, and what could but repel them from it.

Paul answered the summons. The meeting must have been a stormy one. In his letter to the Galatians written sixteen years later he still speaks of that meeting in a tone so severe as to indicate quite clearly how unsparingly the Palestinian apostles must have dealt with him.

But they dealt with no weakling. Paul was not the kind of a man to be swerved from a purpose once resolved upon, no matter how bitter the opposition. With him the only alternative

was Jewish Ceremonial Law without a New Creed, or a New Creed without the Jewish Ceremonial Law, and boldly and irrevocably he decided for the latter. It was hard to be obliged to break with such disciples as Peter, who had been the faithful companion of the Master, and John, who had been the best beloved of all the disciples, and James, the brother of Jesus; but to him the cause was greater than the man. The breach was decisive. The first schism in the new party had taken place. When he left that tribunal, the small band of Nazarenes was hopelessly split into two parties, one party calling itself the *Jewish Christians*, the other party designating itself the *Gentile Christians*. From now on it meant fight for supremacy, not Jew against Christian, but Christian against Christian.

It was a hard road that Paul had to travel, after that stormy meeting at Jerusalem. Wherever he went, the Jewish Christians, the conservators of the ceremonial law and the opponents of an infusion of paganism into Judaism, sent messengers after him to undo his work. The manner in which they did it, and the spirit in which Paul answered, showed little of the gentleness and peacefulness and forgiveness of their Master.

Paul complains bitterly of their maligning his name and their stealing from him the hearts of his followers. But he himself is far from sparing them. His denunciations of his opponents are as bitter as theirs, if not more so. If, at the school of Gamaliel, he had learned the precept: "Remove the beam from thine own eye before finding fault with the splinter in another's," he had forgotten to practice it. Opposition made him only the more daring. His opponents found him a combatant worthy of their steel. Arguments failing to convince Paul of the error of his way, they resorted, if we can trust a report from a rather questionable source, to personal attack. If true, it was an ominous beginning for the founders of the church of the Messiah, a beginning that was destined, before long, to inaugurate centuries of persecution and bloodshed, because of differences of creed.

The majority of the Christians of that day, continued to consider themselves Jewish in everything excepting their beliefs in the *Messiahship Fulfilled*. Not even the question as to whether they should regard themselves a new Jewish sect entered their minds, how much less their constituting themselves a new religious body. Nothing was further from their thoughts than separating themselves from their brethren, and making common cause with their pagan enemy.

Not so Paul. He was hard at work in creating a new religion, with Gentiles and with Hellenized colonial Jews for its followers.

Overzeal and persecution seem to have made him impatient and wholly reckless as to the effect his work would have upon his people. He evolved a new creed, a creed entirely dogmatic: Jesus was the *Christ*, which is the Greek for the Hebrew word *Messiah*; Christ was the only begotten Son of God; the Son of God was crucified as an atonement for the sins of all; Christ crucified rose after death; Faith in the risen Christ brings salvation, and dispenses with every requirement of the ceremonial law.

Thus was born a new religion, with Christ, practically, for its God, and with Paul for its chief apostle.

A number of factors greatly aided him in preparing the way for his new religion becoming the dominant faith of the world. The first was the active proselytizing in the Graeco-Roman empire that had commenced, as we have seen, before the advent of Paul, that was being actively pursued, at that time, in the Jewish colonies, that was acquainting Gentiles with Jewish philosophy and ethics, and that was meeting with remarkable success everywhere.

Another factor was the faulty Greek rendition of the Bible and the yet more faulty Philonic method of interpretation. This method afforded wide latitude in the expounding of Scriptures, and large freedom in the way of making additions and substitutions and alterations, and disposed large numbers of the Hellenized colonial Jews easily to fall in the way of Paul's teaching and leading, being ignorant of the Hebrew Scriptures and of Rabbinical lore and of Palestinian faithfulness to ceremonial law.

A third factor, and perhaps the most important one, was the political status in Palestine at that time. Rome's grip around the throat of Judea was pressing tighter and tighter. Differences of sect lost all interest. There was but one interest: the preservation of the Nation and the Temple. Soon even that interest narrowed to preservation of life. Later, in the year 70 C. E., the Temple lay in ruins. The people lay crushed. Judea ceased among the nations. And, with the ending of the nation, Essene and Sadducee and Pharisee and Nazarene likewise passed away.

During all the periods of stress and storm preceding the final overthrow of the nation, and while the Palestinian Nazarenes had little opportunity for missionary labors, Paul was hard at work in the colonies. While his Judean brethren strove for the preservation of one of the oldest nations, he labored untiringly for the founding of a new faith. Having the field entirely to himself, he made such use of it that when, about the year 67, he suddenly disappeared from among the living, Christianity had found a strong foothold in Asia and in Europe. In the very strong-

holds of paganism, in Antioch, in Athens, in Rome, in Cyprus, Ephesus, Corinth, in Phrygia and Macedonia, and in other cities and provinces, Christian communities had been established by him.

It is much to be deplored that a compromise could not have been effected between the Nazarenes and Paul, that the former could not have been persuaded to lay less emphasis on ceremonialism, and the latter to lay less stress on myth and mysticism. A new prophet, Jesus by name, would have been added to the galaxy of Jewish prophets. Jewish proselytizing zeal would have spread among the Gentiles a faith free from Grecian and Roman mythology and from Egyptian and Persian mysticism, from doctrines of virgin-birth and vicarious atonement and resurrection and original sin and purgatory, and the like, which have wrought no end of troubles for Christianity, and brought no end of sufferings upon countless thousands of believers in other faiths.

But, notwithstanding Paul's pre-eminent part in the founding and planting of the new faith, he was a Jew in spirit, was proud of being one, and continued a Jew in spirit unto the end of his days. Proudly he says: "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." (33) "What advantage hath the Jew? Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." (34) Again and again he emphasizes that the Jews are his first concern. (35) Indignantly he says of his opponents "Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I." He would have as readily resented an insult to his people as an insult to himself. With the exception of a single phrase in an epistle ascribed to him, but of questionable authorship, not a sound is heard in all his writings of those slanderous charges against the Jews, charges of persecution and crucifixion of Jesus by his own people, of which later New Testament writings are full.

How and why these charges were made, and how and why they found their way into the New Testament, of these and also of the gradual acquisition of power by the new church, and of its abuse of its power, we shall speak in the last discourse of this short series on the transmutation of the Judean Jesus into a Pagan Christ.

33. Romans XI, 1.

34. Romans III, 1-2.

35. Romans I, 16; II, 9-10.

DISCOURSE V.

THE GENTILES AND JESUS.

Our last discourse told of the rise of Paul as a follower of the Galilean Rabbi, of his resolve to spread the Nazarene's teaching among the Gentiles, of his recognition that, to meet with success, he would have to dispense the Gentiles from a compliance with the Jewish ceremonial law, and harmonize with the new teaching some of the beliefs that were dear to the pagans. We were told also of the bitter opposition which this radical innovation aroused among the Palestinian, personal disciples of Jesus, and of the splitting of the small band of *Nazarenes* into a *Jewish Christian* party and a *Gentile Christian* party. We saw the missionary zeal of the latter meet with remarkable success, while the former we saw well-nigh overwhelmed during Judea's death struggle with Rome.

But, before long, it became manifest that, while Titus had conquered Judea, he had not annihilated the Jews, and, while he had driven the *Jewish Christians* from Jerusalem, he had not crushed them nor obliterated the memory of their crucified Master. They had found a new centre at Batanea, on the other side of the Jordan, and had acquired a new name, the *Ebionites*. The Hebrew meaning of the word is "*the Poor*." There has been much dispute as to the origin of that name. Some think that, originally, it was a term of opprobrium, flung at them by the *Gentile Christians*, and intended to reflect on their lack of such Hellenic culture as their opponents possessed. Others believe that the term arose from their extreme poverty, which was forced upon them by the exigencies that followed the long and destructive war with Rome. In time, these *Ebionites* made a virtue of their reproach or their necessity. They were proud of their poverty, whether mental or physical, for in the *Sermon on the Mount* their Master had said (or perhaps they said it for him), according to Matthew: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (36); according to Luke: "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye that hunger." (37)

Like unto their predecessors, the *Nazarenes*, they continued loyal Jews, differing from their brethren only in the belief that

36. Matthew V, 3.

37. Luke VI, 20-1.

Jesus had fulfilled the expected Messiahship. Beyond that belief, they attributed to their Master no superhuman distinction. He had been but a man among men, a prophet among prophets, had been born of Joseph and Mary, as had been other members of his family, descendants of whom still lived among them. For them the Mosaic law was still in force, which they scrupulously obeyed. They observed the weekly Sabbath and the Holy Days. From a national capital, Jerusalem had become to them a spiritual center. To it they turned when they prayed. Its restoration to its former glory continued to be their most fervent aspiration. For their rehearsal of the story of the life and deeds of Jesus, they made use of a gospel of their own, whose very opening words: "*There was a man, named Jesus, about thirty years old, who hath chosen us out,*" contradicted the teaching of their opponents of Christ's miraculous birth and divine nature, they knowing only too well that the Hellenists had either ignorantly, or intentionally translated the word of Isaiah (38) meaning "*young woman,*" into "*virgin.*"

A fact, far-reaching in its significance, is well to be borne in mind at this juncture. Both, the *Nazarenes* and the *Ebionites* (the ones representing the personal disciples of Jesus, and counting among themselves members of his family,—the others being of the second generation, children or converts of those who had walked and talked with him, and counting among themselves descendants of his family) both speak of Jesus as one who was human born, one who lived and died as a Jew in profession and practice. Neither of these, who were closest to their Master, had the slightest knowledge of that horrible charge, that was trumped up by later pagan propagandists, that the Jews had persecuted Jesus and had not rested until they had nailed him to the cross.

Like unto the *Nazarenes*, their predecessors, the *Ebionites* were opposed to the latitudinarian policy of Paul. To them is ascribed the authorship of a book, which made its appearance at that time, under the name of *Simon Magus*. It purports to give a series of disputes between the apostle Peter, the head of the *Jewish Christians*, and Paul, the founder of the *Gentile Christians*. The *Simon Magus* of the book is Paul, and against him are directed its various charges of corrupting old teachings and introducing new doctrines. Simon insists that the Bible itself teaches that God represents a plural personality in such verses "*Let us make man in our image, behold he is become as one of us,*" to which Peter replies: Whatever one wants to find in Scriptures he

readily finds. Simon is accompanied in his wanderings by a beautiful but frail woman, Helena by name, a personification of Hellenic philosophy, which he is charged with spreading among the Gentiles, under the guise of Christianity, and by means of which he is falsifying the primitive teachings of Jesus. Peter spurns Simon's claim to apostleship on the authority of a vision. He thinks it very strange that his many years of personal intercourse with Jesus should not have taught him what a single vision of a single hour had taught Simon as to the nature and essence of the character and teaching of the Master. And he concludes that there is no better evidence for the fictitious nature of Paul's vision than that his teachings are contrary to what Jesus had taught.

We spoke of the *Ebionites* having had a gospel of their own. This is the earliest mention of a gospel. Its date was probably the beginning of the second century. Judging from the fragments of it that have survived, it probably contained a sketch of the life of Jesus and a collection of his "sayings," which, like the collections of "sayings" of other Rabbis of that day, had been cherished and transmitted by the disciples.

From that time forth, gospels sprang up everywhere—there is a record of some fifty of them—differing considerably from each other in the accounts they give of the life and teaching of the Nazarene, and, at times, contradicting each other in very essential points. The one-time simple story of the Galilean teacher and patriot and martyr had been transmitted from mouth to mouth, and from country to country, and, when finally committed to writing, revealed the different minds and countries through which it had passed, and the different purposes it had subserved.

The different contents of these various gospels were becoming so confusing and contradictory, that Bishop Papias, who lived about the middle of the second century, declared that no reliance at all is to be placed on the written gospels, that the only way of learning the truth about Jesus is to accost such men who had known old men, who, in their youth, had had personal relationship with the Master.

What he sought especially were the "Sayings" of Jesus, to be used for the religious and ethical guidance of the new church. Of these he made a collection, which collection became one of the many nuclei of what is known as the *Sermon on the Mount*. Of this sermon some gospels, like those according to Mark and John, know nothing; some, like Luke, only know a few "sayings"; whereas Matthew's collection comprises several chapters, many of his "sayings" being borrowed from other and older Rabbis, and many of them being additions by later propagandic hands. The

gospel story of Jesus as now told in the New Testament was unknown until the last quarter of the second century—one and three-fourth centuries after the birth of Jesus. Even in modern times, notwithstanding the advantages of the printing press and the larger critical sense and greater historic conscience, allowance must be made for data reaching one or two centuries back. What is not said of Washington and Jefferson that is not true? and they lived but a century and a half ago. What is not fastened upon Lincoln that is not true? and he lived but half a century ago. How much less reliance is to be placed on data of 1700 years ago, that was transmitted for nearly two centuries from mouth to mouth, from country to country, in a credulous age, and when the data transmitted was of a religious, controversial and missionary nature?

For a glimpse of how the gospel grew, by processes of elimination and accretion, into the present-day New Testament form, we must wend our way from Palestine to the Hellenic provinces and to Rome, and follow the labors of those who continued the mission of Paul.

Paul had met with remarkable success in his dissemination of the new creed. But, for a century or more, it was a question whether the new creed would take permanent root and become a new church, and, for fully two centuries, it continued an open question whether, if the new creed resulted into a new church, it would regard Jesus a human being, or worship him as a deity.

And, at one time, it looked quite doubtful whether this new creed would survive at all. That was during the period of its terrible persecution by the Romans. The zeal with which the missionaries prosecuted their work, and the success with which they met alarmed the Romans, among them some of the otherwise noblest of their emperors. The new converts not only renounced the religion of the State, but also refused obedience to some of the Roman laws and institutions. Fearing that, if unchecked, the new movement might undermine the empire, Rome determined to stamp it out. Although eminent historians have assured us that the accounts of the persecutions of that age, that have come down to us from Christian sources, have been much exaggerated, still there is enough of truth in them to convince us that the establishment of Christianity in the Roman empire cost the lives of hundreds of Christian martyrs. It was a costly price, but just the kind of price that made the new creed all the more precious in the eyes of the followers, and all the more worthy of being propagated. The greater the martyrdoms the keener became the zeal to spread the new church; and the greater the zeal the larger was the success.

And the greater the success the greater were the liberties the missionaries took with the simple story of the Nazarene, so as to overcome every barrier in the way of making the new creed not only the creed of the empire but also of the world.

Paul was dead, but his spirit survived, and his method, daring as it was, was improved upon by his successors. Being Romans, they shared Rome's ambition for universal rulership. The Roman empire of that day comprised well-nigh the whole civilized world. It embraced many peoples of many tongues, faiths, characteristics and degrees of culture, and to these the new creed had to be spread in accordance with their different predilections. Paul's confession (39) that, for the sake of spreading the gospel, he was ever ready to harmonize his views with all men's views, that he became "all things to all men," a liberal Jew with liberal Jews, a conservative with conservatives, became his successors' plan of action. And with it they went forth to present the new creed in whatever form or guise acceptable; to the Hellenist in the gnostic form, taking cognizance of the Philonic philosophy; to the Egyptian, in the trinitarian form, reconciling the triad of Osiris, Isis and Horus with the doctrine of Father, Son and Holy Ghost; to the Persian, in the dualistic form, accepting his angelology, demonology and Satan; to the Judean in the Judean form fulfilling supposed Messianic prophecies; to the pagan in the pagan form, transferring parts of mythology into the gospels; to the ascetic in the ascetic form, to the mystic in the mystic form, to yet others in yet other form.

The story of Jesus was turned and twisted to satisfy the theological requirements of the people to whom it was brought. Differences of opinion arising, the story was molded according to the different opinions held. Bishop Irenaeus (185 C. E.) complained of theologians who "with great craftiness adapt parts of Scriptures to their theories" . . . "adapt the oracles of God to their baseless fictions, by violently drawing away from their proper connections words, expressions and parables wherever found," and in the end he himself did the very thing he complained of in others.

There was no historic conscience at that time. The literature of the missionaries was what the Germans call "*Tendenz-Literatur*," literature with a special end in view. They saw nothing incongruous in the method they adopted. If it was a fraud, it was a pious fraud. The end sought justified, in their eyes, the means employed. Serapion (190 C. E.) claimed that the Gospel of Peter

39. I Corinth. IX, 19-23.

had been written in the interest of one kind of theology. Tertulian (200 C. E.) tells of another gospel written in the interest of another kind of theology. The *Gospel according to the Egyptians* was written in the interest of the asceticism that was prevalent in the Egyptian churches. The *Gospel according to Mark* was written in the interest of Peter; that according to Luke, in the interest of Paul; that according to John, in the interest of the Gnostics. With reference to Jesus, the point of view of Mark is that he was human-born; that of Matthew is that he was the Savior of the Jews; that of Luke is that he was the Savior of both Jews and Gentiles; that of John is that he was the heaven-descended, only-begotten Son of God. Little wonder, that as early as St. Augustine (400 C. E.) there were eighty-eight different Christian sects. Little wonder that the great critic and historian, Ewald, recognizes as many as twelve different hands in the composition of the gospels of the New Testament. Little wonder that we find in the gospels any number of myths, miracles and fictions found among the earlier religious beliefs of the people in whose midst the missionaries labored.

One gospel gives Jesus a natural birth, another, a divine birth; one makes him a son of Joseph; another a Son of God. According to one gospel he came for Israel only and to bring peace and to preserve the old dispensation; according to another, he came for the Gentiles, and to bring the sword, and to divide households, and to do away with the old law. He is given a virgin-birth as was given, centuries earlier, to Krishna, Buddha, Confucius, and others. A special star manifests itself at the advent of Jesus, even as it did at the birth of Buddha. Yet more sweetly sang and spoke the angels of heaven at the birth of Buddha than at the birth of Jesus; and yet more severely did Satan tempt the former than he tempted the latter. The story of wise men coming from afar to worship the new-born Savior was sculptured on the walls of an Egyptian temple, 1500 years before the birth of Jesus, and was likewise told of Krishna. Herod's seeking to destroy the Christ-child is anticipated in the life of Krishna. The miracles performed by Jesus are those performed by earlier pagan gods, demigods and any number of saviors. The story of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus during the vernal equinox is that told of the Syrian sun god Tammuz, of the Egyptian sun god Osiris, of the Grecian god Adonis, of the Hindu savior Krishna.

Interesting as are these adaptations of old beliefs to the new gospel, they are harmless compared with the methods pursued by the missionaries to silence Jewish opposition, or to bring such opposition into contempt. With all his radical innovations, Paul was

of Jewish birth, his education was largely Jewish, he was proud of his people and of their mission. He meant but to advance the cause of Judaism, by giving it the form that might make it universal, even if at the expense of borrowing much from those he intended to benefit. His thorough knowledge of his people naturally put restraint on his propagandic methods as far as they applied to the Jews. There is, therefore, not a word to be found in his authentic writings of Jews having persecuted and crucified Jesus. What better authority than he that that charge was a base invention, seeing that he lived the first twenty years of his life contemporaneously with Jesus, and part of that time at Jerusalem, and that, as founder of Christianity, he was naturally in the best position to know how and at whose hands Jesus met his death!

But his knowledge of Jews and Judaism was not that of his successors. Far removed from Palestine, without knowledge of Hebrew, of Rabbinical laws and institutions, even of Palestinian geography, they tell of Jews having said and done things that contradict every known law of Israel. They elaborate a trial-proceeding such as might have taken place before a magistrate at Rome, but never before a Judean Sanhedrin. They speak of two High Priests, when there was never more than one at a time. They have a trial on the night of the Passover, when no court session could be held. They try a case, involving capital punishment, at night, which is contrary to Jewish law. They have Jesus accused and condemned to death for holding different religious opinions, when Essene, Sadducee and Pharisee held radically different religious opinions with impunity. (40)

But, there was a reason for all these inventions. And there was a reason for the thirty years long silence that stretches between the year of the birth of Jesus, and the year of his death. Those thirty years told of his Jewish life and aspirations. They told of his discipleship under Pharisean masters. They told of his ambition and attempt to emancipate Judea from the hand of the cruel Roman. And that record had to be expunged, even at the expense of leaving in the life-story of Jesus a gap that is as astounding as it is unfortunate.

The successors of Paul were Romans more yet than missionaries, and as such inherited Rome's hatred of the Jew. The various armed uprisings of Judea against Rome, and the unyielding opposition of the Jews and of the *Jewish Christians* to the liberties the *Gentile Christians* had taken with the Galilean prophet and

40. See author's "A Rabbi's Impression of the Oberammergau Passion Play."

patriot, and with the Hebrew Scriptures, greatly intensified that hatred.

Conditions arose which in the eyes of the missionaries made hatred of the Jews even a necessity. Some of the persecutions they had suffered at the hands of the Romans had been due to their having been classed with the Jews. Emperor Hadrian's vengeful interdiction of the practice of Judaism in the whole of Judea, on the pain of death (135 C. E.), and his persecution of Jews in the Roman provinces, made it politic on the part of the *Gentile Christians* to sever every bond between themselves and the Jews, and to make public manifestation that their faith had nothing in common with that of the Jews. They were followers of Christ, and Christ no longer was a Judean but a Deity, co-equal and co-eternal with God, same in essence and substance, one of the three divine manifestations, as expressed in the trinitarian doctrine, God was the *Father*, the Father's word was the Son, the Son's spirit was the *Holy Ghost*. They substituted Sunday for the Saturday-Sabbath, and Resurrection-Day for the Passover.

The bridge from Judaism to Christianity, which Philo had unconsciously constructed by his allegorical method of interpretation, and across which Paul had passed, was destroyed by the Gentile converts, and thus was introduced between the old and the new, a chasm which grew the wider and deeper as the centuries advanced.

To make the severance more complete, they reconstructed the gospel story in a manner so cruel to the Jews, that the like of it has probably never been equaled before or since. That reconstruction story tells that the Jews were a very wicked people. Because they were wicked, God sent to them His only-begotten Son to save them from everlasting punishment. Because this heaven-descended Son of God sought to reform them, they—so runs the reconstructed story, of which the early disciples know nothing—hated him, even as they hated the Romans, of whom the Savior had been very fond, having preferably consorted with the Roman tax-gatherers, and having publicly taught: "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's."

Not the Sadducees, who were friendly to the Romans, (and who alone could have persecuted Jesus and his followers, if a persecution there was, fearing lest the Messiah-agitation might arouse the Roman, and disturb their peaceful and profitable relationship with him) not the Sadducees, but the Pharisees, the party that was bitterly opposed to Rome's rule over Judea, these—whom in revenge they designated as the most corrupt, most fanatical, most hypocritical of all the Jews—made the Savior the special object of

their hatred, and rested not until they had brought him to trial, before a corrupt court, and until, with the aid of suborned witnesses, they compelled the Roman procurator, the kind-hearted Pontius Pilate, much against his will, to nail the Savior to the cross.

It was an infamous stroke of policy, one quite characteristic of the heartlessness of the Roman, a stroke of policy that has shed more innocent blood that has outraged more people, that has agonized more hearts, than probably have all the policies combined that have ever been resorted to to further political or ecclesiastical ambition. We know of only the Dreifus case to which we can, in a remote degree, liken this monstrous falsification. The Dreifus case, however, dealt with but one man who, by reason of forgeries and falsifications, was made to suffer innocently, for some five years. But here was a falsification that concerned a whole people, whose subsequent sufferings have endured seventeen hundred years long, and the end is not yet in sight. Here was a falsification that was trumped up against the Jewish people, at a time when they were well-nigh crushed, that was rooted wherever the new creed was spread, and that, for many long and painful centuries, made it a crime, punishable in the torture-chamber or at the stake, for a Jew even to attempt to clear himself of the cruel charge.

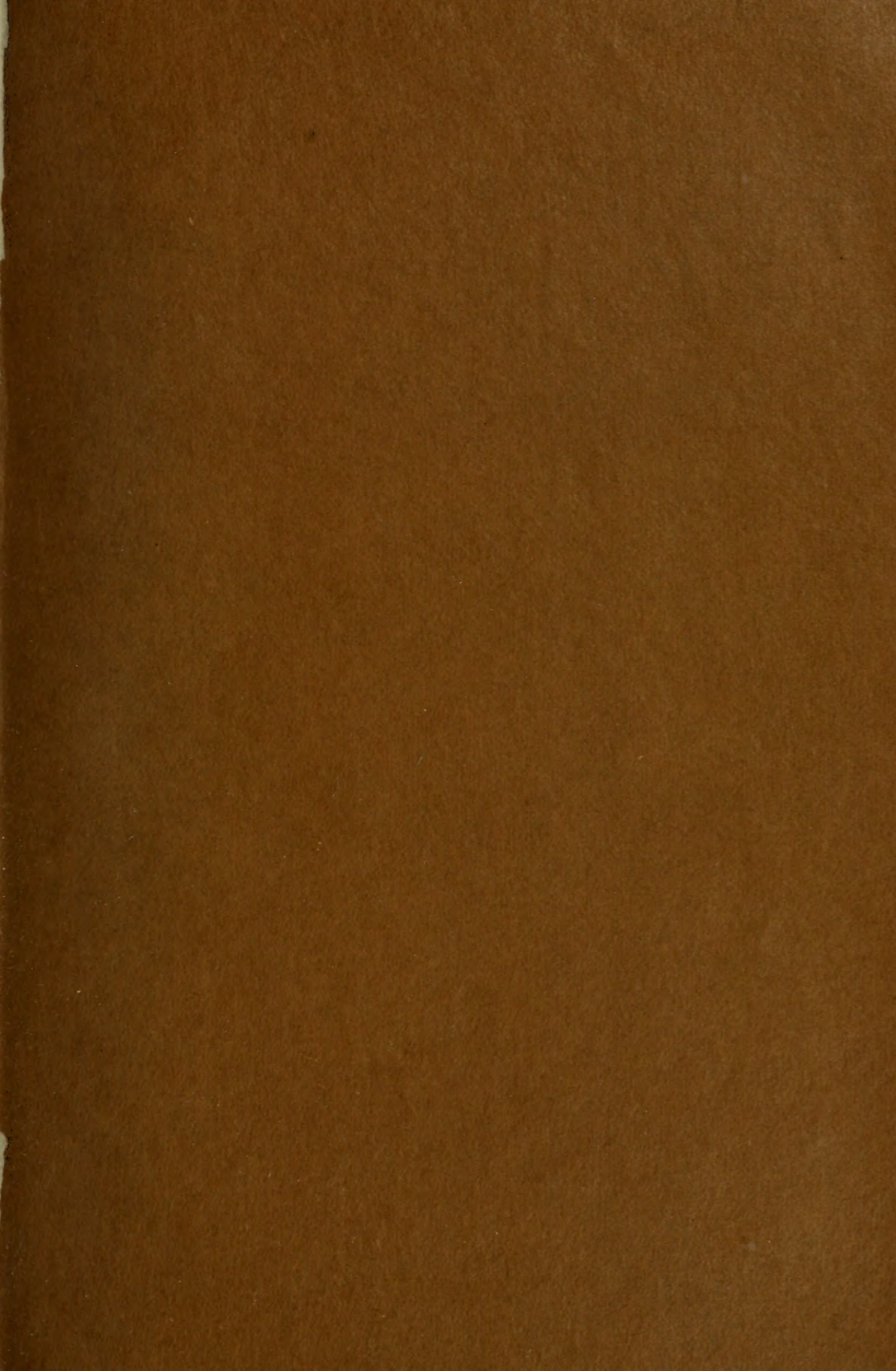
False as the charge was, it failed not of its end. Notwithstanding the Roman records themselves have stamped Pontius Pilate as one of the most cruel of procurators, notwithstanding that Tacitus, the distinguished Roman historian, transcribing from the records, tells of Jesus having been crucified by Pontius Pilate, the falsification cleared the Romans of the charge of deicides. Larger and larger grew the following of the new creed. Greater and greater grew the ambition of its propagandists. At last it won a Roman emperor (312 C. E.) and, in winning him, it won the Roman empire, and became, as had been the religion which it supplanted, a State Church.

Its becoming a State Church was, next to the falsification of the gospel, its most fatal error. It acquired power. Power brought intolerance and corruption. The contradictory nature of the gospel, and the variously derived characterizations of Christ, naturally became a source of legitimate theological differences. These the State Church suppressed amidst horrible persecutions and massacres. Independent thought was prohibited, and the inquisition with all its horrors was introduced to enforce the prohibition. Scientific research was interdicted on the pain of death. Even reading and studying the Scriptures were prohibited to lay-people, at the risk of the curse of the church. A deep, dark night

settled over Christianity, enduring a thousand years, and lifting only with the dawn of the Reformation.

As for the Jews, the cruelties and outrages, the expulsion and massacres, which the Church of Christ visited upon them constitute the darkest chapter in the history of religion. To them especially the church, founded on love and peace and justice, became a church of hatred and inhumanity.

With the advent of the Reformation began the slow return from the pagan Christ to the Judean Jesus, the gradual stripping away of the many foreign-borrowed accretions under which the Nazarene prophet and patriot had well-nigh been buried. Larger and larger is growing the tendency of the Christian church to turn from oriental mysticism and pagan mythology to the ethical teachings of the Galilean. There is more and more of a recognition that the strength of Christianity is the morality of Judaism, and its weakness the mythology of heathenism. After eighteen hundred years of cruel separation, Christian and Jew are drawing closer to each other. Within the Unitarian and Reformed Jewish Churches the advanced guard of both factions have already met. The few are prophetic of the many that are to follow. From out the chaos of Christology, the Nazarene Master will rise in all the glory of his pristine simplicity and purity. In the inspiring life and enobling teaching of the Judean Jesus, Christian and Jew will reunite. There will be an expunging from the New Testament of foreign material and falsified history, of pagan mythology and Persian demonology and Egyptian mysticism, that were introduced for propagandic purposes. That which will be left will be Judaism, pure and simple, the Judaism that was taught by a Jewish prophet and patriot and martyr, the Rabbi of Nazareth.

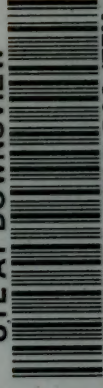


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